



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

“THE TEMPEST AT HIR HOOM-COMINGE.”

One of the puzzles of the *Knight's Tale* has been Chaucer's reference to the tempest on the arrival of Hippolyta at Athens :

And how asseged was Ipolita,
The faire hardy quene of Scithia ;
And of the feste that was at hir weddinge,
And of the tempest at hir hoom-cominge.¹

There is, as has been often noted, no mention of a storm in either Statius' or Boccaccio's account of the event, so that the detail is added by Chaucer of his own motion. Yet Herzberg long ago observed very justly that “Chaucer auf diese Dinge doch offenbar ganz unbefangen so hinweist, dass man schliessen muss, er habe sie irgendwo als Thatsachen berichtet gelesen.”² At all events, whether the suggestion came from what Chaucer had read, or from something he had himself otherwise known, it is clear that specific suggestion of some sort there must have been, since the circumstance is not one which in any conceivable fashion grows naturally out of the general situation he is describing.

The difficulty has been met in two ways. The first, as is well known, was that of Tyrwhitt, who substituted *temple* for *tempest*, with the following note : “The Editions, and all the mss. except two, read *tempest*. But the *Theseida* says nothing of any *tempest*. On the contrary it says, that the passage

Tosto fornito fu et senza pene.

I have therefore preferred the reading of MSS. C. i. and HA. as Theseus is described making his offerings, &c. upon his return, in a temple of Pallas. Thes. l. ii.”³ Tyrwhitt's C. i. is

¹ A. 881-884 (K. T. 23-26).

² Wilhelm Herzberg: *Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury-Geschichten* (Hildburghausen, 1866), p. 596.

³ *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer* (London, 1775), iv, 217. To the statement quoted—e'l suo passaggio Tosto fornito, etc. (*Teseide*, II, 18)—may be added *Teseide* II, 9 :

Quindi spirando tra Borea e Coro
Ottimo vento, da quella marina
Li tolse, lor portando in verso Atene
Il più del tempo colle vele piene.

The reference to the *temple* is as follows :

E con esso in Atene rientrati,
Diritto andò al tempio di Pallade
A riverir di lei la deitade.

Quivi con riverenza offerse molto,
E le sue armi ed altre conquistate.

(*Teseide*, II, 23-24.)

the manuscript now known as Cambridge Dd. 4.24, in the University Library⁴; his HA is the “Haistwell ms.,” better known as Egerton 2726, in the British Museum⁵—both of Skeat's “A-type.” Opposed to these are, as Tyrwhitt recognized, the rest of the mss. he then knew, including the single one of the Six-text mss. with which he was acquainted (the Landsdowne—his W), and the Harleian—his C. To these must now be added the remaining five of the Six-text mss. with the exception of the Cambridge (Gg. 4.27) in which ll. 754-964 are missing.⁶ The gap is filled from the Sloane ms. 1685 (Tyrwhitt's G), and in l. 884 the word we are concerned with is so blurred that its space, in the printed text, is left blank.⁷

Tyrwhitt's suggestion has never met—as in the face of the overwhelming manuscript evidence against it, it could not meet—serious acceptance, except on the part of a few popularizers of Chaucer,⁸ and oddly enough, the large majority of his translators.⁹ It need not be considered further.

⁴ Tyrwhitt, *op. cit.*, I, xxii; Oxford, *Chaucer* iv, xii, no. 29. It is printed in *Chaucer Soc. Pub.*, First Series, xciv, 1901. See Pt. I, p. 26.

⁵ Tyrwhitt, *op. cit.*, I, xxiii; Oxford, *Chaucer*, iv, x, no. 13. Parts of it are printed to fill gaps in Camb. Dd. 4.24, just mentioned, and a few lines of it are quoted in the Six-text edition.

⁶ Oxford *Chaucer*, iv, ix, No. 8.

⁷ See Six-text edition (*Chaucer Soc. Pt. I*), p. 26. Mr. Skeat's statement (*Oxford Chaucer* v. 62) which refers to “the reading *tempest*, as in all the seven mss.,” is accordingly not strictly accurate, so far as the Cambridge ms. is concerned. It is clear, however, that Tyrwhitt read *tempest* in the Sloane ms.

⁸ John Saunders: *Canterbury Tales from Chaucer* (London, 1845) I, 12: “of the temple erected on her coming home,” (so also in new and revised edition, London, 1889, p. 173); Charles Cowden Clarke: *Tales from Chaucer in Prose* (London, 1870), p. 92: “of the temple that was raised upon her coming home to Athens.”

⁹ The translations of the line are interesting, as showing the different interpretations put upon the passage, where Tyrwhitt's reading is accepted. A few instances are worth giving: “Vom Tempel auch, den sie daheim gefunden,” Karl Ludwig Kannegiesser: *Gottfried Chaucer's Canterbury'sche Erzählungen* (Zwickau, 1827) I, 44; “Vom Tempel, den sie bei der Heimkehr fanden,” Eduard Fiedler: *Chaucer's Canterbury-Erzählungen* (Dessau, 1844), I, 62; “Und von dem Tempel, da sie ward empfangen,” Wilhelm Herzberg: *Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury-Geschichten* (Hildburghausen, 1866), p. 93; “Ihr Tempelgagn und ihre Heimwärtsreise,” Adolf von Düring: *Geoffrey Chaucer's Werke* (Strassburg, 1885), II, 31; “Je pourrais

The second attitude towards the problem accepts the line as it clearly stands, and proceeds to look for mention of a tempest somewhere in Chaucer's sources. The only such mention so far found seems to be that cited by Professor Skeat in his note on the line in the *Oxford Chaucer*. "I think," he says, "the solution is to be found by referring to Statius. Chaucer seems to have remembered that a tempest is there described (Theb. xii, 650-5), but to have forgotten that it is merely introduced by way of *simile*. In fact, when Theseus determines to attack Creon (see l. 960), the advance of his host is likened by Statius to the effect of a tempest. The lines are :

'Qualis Hyperboreos ubi nubilus institit axes
Jupiter, et prima tremefecit sidera bruma,
Rumpitur Aeolia, et longam indignata quietem
Tollit hiems animos, uentosaque sibilat Arctos ;
Tunc montes undaeque fremunt, tunc proelia caesis
Nubibus, et tonitrus insanaque fulmina gaudent.' " 10

But, even granted that Chaucer forgot that Statius was using the tempest only in a *simile*, there seems to be no satisfactory reason why he should recall the passage in connection with the festivities at Hippolyta's wedding, and associate it definitely with her home-coming. So far as Mr. Skeat's solution has met with acceptance at all, it has been simply because, despite most careful searching of the sources, no other tempest whatever has been forthcoming.

Must the tempest, however, necessarily be looked for only in the *books* which Chaucer read? References to contemporary events are comparatively few in his poems, but they occur frequently enough to render necessary their inclusion among the possibilities in a given case—even when the case in question demands the dramatic weaving of the reference into the very texture of the piece. One need only recall, for instance, in the *Knight's*

Tale itself, the reference to Wat Tyler's rebellion in Saturn's speech to Venus¹¹; in the *Pardoner's Tale*, the mention of the pestilence¹²; and in the *Envoy to Scogan*, the allusion to the heavy rains of 1393¹³—even if one exclude from bearing on the present instance the more explicit reference to Jack Straw in the *Nun's Priest's Tale*,¹⁴ because it occurs in a comparison; or the nun's priest's reference to the Archbishop of Canterbury,¹⁵ because it is spoken in the priest's own person.¹⁶ There is, then, in a word, no *a priori* reason for excluding the possibility, in the line under discussion, of an allusion to an actual occurrence in Chaucer's own day, two things provided: first, that such an occurrence have general notoriety; and second, that its attendant circumstances more or less closely parallel the situation Chaucer is describing. Curiously enough, there was an exceedingly interesting contemporary event which strikingly fulfils both conditions.

On Wednesday, the 18th of December, 1381,¹⁷ Anne of Bohemia, on her way from Brussels to London, where she was to be married to Richard II, embarked at Calais, and the same day, having

¹¹ A. 2459.

¹² C. 679.

¹³ II. 1-14, &c.

¹⁴ B. 4584-7.

¹⁵ B. 4635.

¹⁶ For other references to contemporary events, see A. 276-7; E. 995-1001, etc. Cf. *Oxford Chaucer*, I, lvi.

¹⁷ The date is that given by Gairdner in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, s. v. Anne of Bohemia (I, 421). The chroniclers vary in their statements of it. See, for accounts of the marriage, Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. Raynaud (Paris, 1897), x, 165 ff.; ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Bruxelles, 1869), ix, 459-62; ed. Buchon (Paris, 1824), viii, 118 ff.; trans. Johnes (Hafod Press, 1804), ii, 512 ff.; trans. Berners (Tudor Translations, London, 1901), iii, 273-6; the Monk of Evesham: *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi II*, ed. Hearne (Oxford, 1729), p. 35; Thomas Otterbourne, *Chronica Regum Anglie*, ed. Hearne (Oxford, 1732), I, 155; Knighton's *Chronica* (in *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores X*, London, 1652), ii, 2644—also in Rolls' Series, ed. Lumby (London, 1889), ii, 150-151; Stow: *Annales* (London, 1631), pp. 294-5; Fabyan: *The New Chronicles of England and France*, ed. Ellis (London, 1812), p. 531; John Hardyng: *Chronicle*, ed. Ellis (London, 1812), p. 340; Kennet: *Complete History of England* (London, 1706), I, 248-9; *Eulogium Historiarum* (Rolls Series, London, 1863), iii, 355; *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II*, etc., ed. Davies (Camden Soc., 1856), p. 121; Rymer: *Foedera* (London, 1728), p. 336; and especially, Walsingham and Holinshed (quoted below).

. . . . vous décrire l'aspect du temple à son arrivée dans Athènes." H. Gomont: *Geoffrey Chaucer, Poète Anglais du XIVe Siècle; Analyses et Fragments* (Paris, 1847) p. 106; "e i sacrifici ch' egli fece, al suo ritorno, nel tempio di Pallade," Cino Chiarini: "*Dalle Novelle di Canterbury di G. Chaucer* (Bologna, 1897), p. 50. One must except the Chevalier de Chatelain: *Contes de Cantorbéry, traduits en vers français de Geoffrey Chaucer* (London, 1857), I, 31: "come aussi la tempête Qui vint assaillir leurs vaisseaux."

¹⁰ v, 62.

been "conveyed with all the glory of the world,"¹⁸ landed at Dover. Scarcely, however, had she set foot on land, when—to use Holinshed's paraphrase of the older account—"a marvellous and right strange woonder happened; for she was no sooner out of hir ship, and got to land in safetie with all hir companie, but that forthwith the water was so troubled and shaken, as the like thing had not to any man's remembrance euer beene heard of: so that the ship in which the appointed queene came ouer, was terrible rent in peeces, and the residue so beaten one against an other, that they were scattered here and there after a woonderful manner."¹⁹ The ultimate authority for the circumstance, however, is Thomas Walsingham, and his account must be quoted in full. "Audito igitur," he says, at the close of his account of the year 1381,²⁰ "ut retulimus, de adventu Reginæ futuræ, solvitur Parliamentum, reincipiendum post regales nuptias et Natale Dominicum. Et insuper laborat unusquisque pro viribus tantas nuptias honorare muneribus, insuper et obsequiis favore dignis. Misum est ergo in obviam tantæ virginis, et conducitur cum omni gloria mundi ad portum usque Doveriæ, comitantibus eam multis nobilibus, tam suæ patriæ quam istius terræ.

"Accidit illo die mirabile cunctis auspiciis, juxta multorum opinionem, favorem Dei, felicia fata terræ affutura præmonstrans. Nam cum pedem terræ intulisset e navi, et salvo cunctis egressis, navigio reliquo, secuta est e vestigio tanta maris commotio, quanta diu ante visa non fuerat; et ipsas naves in portu constitutas adeo agitavit, ut dissiparentur subito et colliderentur, navi prius, in qua Regina consederat, dissoluta, et in multas partes horribiliter comminuta. Quidam vero aliter interpretati sunt supradicta, putantes esse futurum, ut regnum turbaretur per eam, vel regioni incommodum aliquod eveniret. Sed istius dubiæ perplexitatis obscuritatem gesta sequentia declarabunt."²¹ Here, then, we have an actual *maris*

commotio, which occurred at the "home-coming" of a foreign princess to the land of which she was to be queen—an event, moreover, which, on Walsingham's testimony, made a profound and widespread impression at the time. It seems, accordingly, a perfectly natural supposition that as Chaucer summarized in a few rapid lines the account in the *Teseide* of "the feste that was at [the] weddinge" of Hippolyta, who was coming home as queen to Theseus' kingdom, it should recall to him the recent festivities at the wedding of Anne,²² who had likewise come as queen to Richard's kingdom; and that, by the simplest association of ideas, the strange incident which had been to all a marvellous omen, and to some the happy prologue to the destined greatness of the realm, should be transferred, by a single skilful phrase, from Anne's home-coming to Hippolyta's.

It may, however, be said that the "water-shake," as it is called in the margin of Holinshed, which caused the destruction of the queen's ship and the scattering of the fleet, is not definitely stated by Walsingham to have been due to a storm of wind. It is too much to say that the phrase *maris commotio* precludes such an interpretation. Yet even though it be granted that the disturbance was probably the result of an earthquake, such as that of the following June, when, as Knighton tells us, "naves vacillabant in portibus ab aquæ motu,"²³ such an explanation is still quite con-

Series, *Thomæ Walsingham . . . Historia Anglicana*, ed. Riley (London, 1864), II. 46; cf. *Chronicon Angliæ* (Rolls Series, London, 1874), p. 331. The occurrence is also referred to in H. Wallon: *Richard II, Épisode de la Rivalité de la France e de l'Angleterre* (Paris, 1864), I, 125-6; Agnes Strickland: *Lives of the Queens of England* (Philadelphia, 1850), II, 208-9, (London, 1852), I, 595; *Dic. Nat. Biog.* (s. v. Anne of Bohemia), I, 421. For the value of Walsingham's testimony concerning just this period, see Riley in *Hist. Angl.*, II, xv-xix; Gross: *Sources and Literature of English History* (New York, 1900), p. 309.

²² See Walsingham, *op. cit.*, (Rolls Series), II, 47-8: *Hastiludia quoque fiunt pro magnificentia tantæ celebritatis, per dies aliquot; in quibus et Angli et virtutem suam, et patriæ Reginæ suam probitatem, publice demonstrarent. In quibus, non sine damno personarum utriusque partis, laus est acquisita, et rei commendatio militaris.* See also Stow: *op. cit.*, 295; Otterbourne: *op. cit.*, 155; Kennet: *op. cit.*, I, 248-9; etc.

²³ *Op. cit.*, II, 151. For further details regarding the very interesting earthquake referred to, see Stow: *op. cit.*,

¹⁸ Stow, *op. cit.*, 294; cf. "conducitur cum omni gloria mundi," etc., in Walsingham.

¹⁹ Holinshed's *Chronicles* (London, 1807), II, 753.

²⁰ It must be remembered that Walsingham's year begins at Christmas.

²¹ *Historia Brevis Thomæ Walsingham ab Edwardo primo ad Henricum quintum* (London, 1574), p. 299; *ibid.*, in Camden's *Anglica, Normannica, Hibernica, Cambria, a Veteribus Scripta* (Frankfort, 1603) p. 281; also in Rolls

sistent with Chaucer's reference to the "commotion" as a *tempest*.²⁴ What else, indeed, could he call it?²⁵ The words that describe such a phenomenon are both rare and unpoetic. Furthermore, any specifically descriptive phrase, such as Holinshed's "watershake," even were it available on grounds of metre and of taste, would do the very thing so consummate an artist as Chaucer would scrupulously avoid—it would intrude a definite picture from contemporary life upon the world of victory and of melody he was building up, and by "jompring a discordaunt thing y-fere," would violate his own express injunction :

. . . "hold of thy matere
The form alwey and do that it be lyk." ²⁶

On the other hand—if one may for a moment argue in a circle—once grant the association we are assuming, and the poetic word *tempest*, while carrying with it no such disturbing penumbra of concrete local imagery as the other, would still keep, for its own special audience, the pleasant suggestiveness of an allusion to something known—the verbal inaccuracy itself, which in a chronicle might be departure from veracity, becoming the very thing which in the poem achieves artistic truth.²⁷

There seems, then, to be no serious objection on this score ; and when one further remembers that the marriage of Richard and Anne must have

been very definitely present indeed in the mind of the writer of the *Parlement of Foules*, who, moreover, had a few years before been sent to France to negotiate the marriage of Richard to another princess—the possibility grows even stronger of a passing reference, in the line in question, to the nine days' wonder that accompanied the queen's arrival.²⁸

JOHN L. LOWES.

Harvard University.

²⁸ If the above inference be correct, it has interesting bearings on the problem of the date of the *Knight's Tale*. And it may be worth while to call attention to the fact that in the suggestion which Mr. Skeat, in *Notes and Queries* for 1868 (4th Series, II, 243, Sept. 12 ; reprinted in Mr. Furnivall's *Temporary Preface*, Chaucer Soc., 103) threw out, as he says, for what it was worth, it was pointed out that "the years (not bissextile) in which May 5 is on a Sunday, during the last half of the fourteenth century, are these : 1359, 1370, 1381, 1387, 1398 ;" any one of which, accordingly, would fulfil the conditions of Chaucer's treatment of the days of the month and of the week in the *Knight's Tale*. Mr. Skeat's assumption that "Chaucer would have been assisted in arranging all these matters thus exactly, if he had chosen to calculate them according to the year *then current*," and his suggestion that the year 1387 fell in with the internal evidence, was rather contemptuously rejected by ten Brink in his *Studien* (pp. 188-9, note 75), and Mr. Skeat omitted much of this portion of his note in reprinting it in the Oxford *Chaucer* (v, 75-6). Recently, however, Mr. F. J. Mather, in his paper "On the Date of the *Knight's Tale*" (*An English Miscellany*, Presented to Dr. Furnivall, Oxford, 1901, p. 310), has revived Mr. Skeat's calculation, and, on the basis of his own very interesting argument, concludes that "the extreme dates are clearly out of the question ; 1387, too, seems very doubtful, for this assumes that Chaucer went to the pains of working out a chronology while revising a poem, which presumably already had its own ; 1381 fills every condition." Without entering at this time into the merits of the arguments involved, it is interesting to observe that if the line we have discussed was really written within three months of the queen's arrival—that is, by the end of March, 1382—the requirements of the scheme of the days of the month and of the week in the *Knight's Tale*, were exactly satisfied in the May of the then current year—the May, that is, of 1381.

295 ; Fabyan : *op. cit.*, 531 ; Hardyng : *op. cit.*, 339-40 ; *Eulogium Hist.* (as cited), 356 ; *Annales de Bermundeseia* (Rolls Series, in *Annales monastici*, London, 1866), III, 480 ; *Political Poems and Songs* (Rolls Series, ed. Wright, London, 1859), I, 250-2, 254.

²⁴ A striking verification of the manner in which one may assume that even at the time the phenomenon would be viewed, is given by the reference to it in the index of Wallon's *Richard II*, where the entry under *Anne*—"tempête à son arrivée,"—is an almost exact, though certainly unconscious equivalent of Chaucer's line.

²⁵ For the suggestion of this question I am indebted to Professor Kittredge—who is, however, free from responsibility for such answer as is given.

²⁶ *Troilus* II, 1037 ff.

²⁷ We must remember, too, what we are often tempted to forget, that the story, to Chaucer's readers, was a *story*, where a tempest had an inalienable right of its own to be, independent of a previous existence in either Statius or Boccaccio.